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Edna Kells

High River Times.

SENATOR PAT BURNS SURVEYS EIGHTY YEARS

It is appropriate that the last interview given by Senator Burns should be released on his eightieth birthday, July 6th, in newspapers from coast to coast of Canada. The interview was granted to Miss Edna Kells, and extracts from his philosophy are taken from an article which appeared in the Lethbridge Herald, Calgary Herald and other papers.

"The big thing is to do something--not stand idle," he said. "No matter what it is you do, do something. Make a start. Think for yourself. Everyone must think out life for himself and not depend upon others to think for him. Tom Jones can't think for Bill Smith, or Bill Smith for Dick White. When we depend on others to think for us we accept one person's advice and then another's, and another's, so we are likely to do the wrong thing. We must think for ourselves, then act. And when we are busy doing something, Providence will come to our help and we will gradually work our way out."

"Today, though opportunities may be shy, there are more of them as a result of the many new fields which have been opened up and a re-opening up. Western Canada teems with opportunities where 40 or 50 years ago there were few. But men have to go out and look for them and do what they can, even though what they find at the moment is unpromising and distasteful. Something better is bound to work out of it -- granted it is done in the right spirit and with eyes and minds open for something else."

The mining fields now opening up appealed to Senator Burns as opportunities. "If I were a young man I would turn to the mining field," he said.

"When I was a young man and was offered work I took it whether I liked it or liked the pay, or not. The man who takes what he can get today and does his best with it, is the man who will come out of the depression with flying colors."

"But there is another side of the question," I suggested. "When a man hunts for work for months, perhaps years, and cannot find any, he is bound to become bewildered and lose courage."

Irish sympathy responded quickly.

"It's hearbreaking --but fear doesn't help. People shouldn't be afraid of poverty, afraid of doing without, afraid of taking a chance, especially young people."

As we discussed the tragic problem of soil drifting and the different plans for overcoming it, Senator Burns revealed another side of his character--an appreciation of the beautiful and of the influence of beauty on everyday life.

Senator Burns is a lover of trees and it is an easy matter to identify his ranches when driving through the country for he has planted trees along the roadside. These, I found, were not planted with any practical idea in mind, any thought of coping with the problem of soil drifting, but "just to make the country look nice," he explained gently.

"You are a poet," I suggested.

"No, no," he replied hastily - but firmly.

Nevertheless there are many ways in which a poet expresses himself apart from the writing of verse, and every man who plants a tree to make the world more beautiful is a poet at heart.

Senator Burns trod no easy path to affluence, yet he looked back on the roughest bit of road without self-pity. To him life was one long adventure he would gladly, cheerfully have started all over again, without the palatial stone mansion, the lovely garden he earned for himself - without all they represent, if only one gift could be restored. His cry was a challenge.

"Give me my youth again, my youth, and a straw hat and a pair of overalls, and you may have my wealth."